United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General says United Nations financial situation has worsened; unpaid assessed contributions totalled $1.89 billion at end of April; Member States' contributions to date are "just sufficient to meet cash requirements through last week of May".

+ Security Council holds meeting on request by Cuba concerning "sabotage of the Cubana de Avación aircraft" destroyed in mid-flight near Barbados in October 1976.

+ Secretary-General receives letter from Lord Carrington, European Community mediator, saying he has resumed efforts to find political solution to conflict in Yugoslavia.

+ Mission sent by United Nations Drug Control Programme finds that poverty and changing market conditions are causing rapid increase in drug abuse in former Soviet Republics.

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Assessed contributions received from United Nations Member States to date for the regular budget are "just sufficient to meet cash requirements through the last week of May", states Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in a new report on the United Nations financial situation.

In an addendum to his report to the General Assembly, dated 15 May, the Secretary-General says the situation "has become worse" over the past few months, owing in particular to the initiation or expansion of complex tasks in the areas of peace-keeping. At the end of April, unpaid assessed contributions totalled $1.89 billion.

The "extremely precarious" situation, the Secretary-General points out, is due to the "continuing failure" of member countries to pay their assessed contributions to the regular budget and to peace-keeping activities. He reports that it was necessary throughout last year to draw upon the reserves

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of the Organization to meet current operating requirements. In addition, funds have been borrowed from the few peace-keeping operations that had cash in excess of their immediate requirements.

The Secretary-General states that, this year, the ongoing difficulties have been exacerbated by vastly increased requirements for peace-keeping operations, as well as delays in payments of assessments, "particularly by some of the major contributors".

In a statement issued by his Spokesman today, the Secretary-General said that "only the prompt payment of assessments by those Member States who have not yet done so, not internal borrowing or other stop-gap measures, can provide the necessary resources to meet the cash requirements of the Organization in the immediate future". He said that, as of today, only 14 countries had fully paid their assessments for both the regular budget and for peace-keeping operations. They were: Austria, Bhutan, Botswana, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ghana, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Sweden.
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The Security Council was meeting this afternoon at the request of Cuba to consider the item of "the terrorist activities which are being conducted against Cuba and which are promoted, encouraged or tolerated by the Government of the United States".

Cuba made the request on 27 April in a letter which demanded that the Security Council condemn the "sabotage of the Cubana de Avación aircraft" which was destroyed in mid-flight near Barbados in October 1976. The letter charged that the United States was involved in the plane's downing which killed 73 people.

The Cuban Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, said in the letter that "not to condemn that act would dishonour the Council and undermine its prestige and credibility".

The Cuban letter was addressed to the President of the Security Council.

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A United Nations spokesman announced today that the Secretary-General had received a letter from Lord Carrington, the European Community mediator, saying that he was resuming his efforts to try and find a political solution to the conflict in Yugoslavia.

The Secretary-General had replied in a letter reaffirming the support of the United Nations for his efforts and stressing once again the division of labour between the two Organizations, with the United Nations providing the peace-keeping and the EEC the political action.

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Unemployment, widespread poverty, the attraction of foreign lifestyles and the availability of new drugs is causing an alarmingly rapid increase in drug abuse in the seven Republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), according to a fact-finding mission of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

The four-member mission, headed by a former Minister of Justice of Colombia, Enrique Parejo Gonzalez, spent the month of April visiting Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The visit was in response to reports of escalating crime and drug abuse in the Republics of the former Soviet Union.

The mission's mandate was to evaluate the extent of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in each of the States, to assess the status of existing drug control legislation and structures, to draw up an inventory of needs and identify what assistance was required. They recommended, among other moves, the introduction of new anti-narcotic laws, the strengthening of drug law enforcement services and enhanced control of external borders. It also stressed the need to establish proper treatment and rehabilitation for drug addicts, pointing to the fact that till now most such services had been left to the initiative of voluntary organizations.

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